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The Joy of Work

Maltbie D. Babcock



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The Joy of Work

Fragments That Remain

Sermons, Addresses, Prayers of
MALTBIE DAVENPORT BABCOCK

Reported and arranged by
JESSIE B. GOETSCHUIS

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*Reprinted chapters from
"Fragments that Remain"
from the ministry of*

MALTBIE DAVENPORT BABCOCK

Reported and arranged by
JESSIE B. GOETSCHIUS



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THE three chapters comprising this little book are taken from the larger volume "Fragments that Remain," which comprises a number of Dr. Babcock's sermons reproduced from notes preserved by one of his listeners. These notes were made with no thought of publication, but were given to the public eventually because no other volume of Dr. Babcock's sermons had been published.

J. B. G.

I

WORK: A SPIRITUAL NECES-
SITY

*“Thou hast made Thy laws firm and stringent, for
Thou wouldst not have us triflers and idlers. May
we learn that one reason why we suffer is that others,
looking at us, may learn how to suffer.”*

“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”—
JOHN V. 17.

I

Work: A Spiritual Necessity

I AM concerned with the divinity of toil. I want to show, if possible, that toil—all honest toil—is the reflection of the activity of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. While the Jews were trifling over what a man may do on the Sabbath, Christ was working in glorious imitation of, and obedience to, His Father. Whence comes the feeling that it is lowering to work ; that it is far more exalted to draw the purple robes of our idleness about us, and be waited on? The Chinese noble lets his finger nails grow into long, horny, horrid talons to prove to the world that he is not a craftsman, that he never handles tools. We have a feeling of disgust for that, but is there not in the minds of some of us a subcutaneous sympathy with him?

This feeling that work is ignoble does not come from God. He works ; and when, in olden times, He would choose men for His

own special commissions, He called a David from his flock, or a Saul from his farm, or a Gideon from his threshing-floor. To the Church at Antioch He said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the *work* whereunto I have called them." Right from their daily *work* He called them. Did He choose idlers? Certainly not—He had work to be done.

The idea does not come from Christ. He works, too. His life was ceaseless activity—no leisure, so much as to eat. In art, He is represented as gentle, in the sense of being effeminate and weak. Weak? Never! After His agony in the Garden, that great cry on the cross from His broken heart could never have been the cry of a weak man. His whole life trained Him for strength. He handled the saw and the plane; He made ploughshares and yokes; He could sleep in a storm. It is the glory of toil that His hands were hardened and calloused by labour.

The idea does not come from the Apostles. Listen to Paul's strenuous rule for the idle Thessalonians: "Whoso will not work, neither let him eat."

It does not come from our first parents;—they had a garden to take care of. Toil was not the curse on them, for they toiled before

the Fall. The care of that garden must have been beautiful work. I have always hoped to be able to work in a garden myself, to work in honest dirt, to smell the soil as it smelt when I was a boy. I hope some time to do my work as a minister, and play in a garden.

What is play? What is the difference between it and work? Some one has said, "Play is activity *as* an end, and work is activity *for* an end." There is a great difference; but note that both are forms of activity. Play should be a preparation for work, the leading of activity into right channels. Therefore, watch your children's games. Let their games be a help; direct them; don't let them be games of chance, for it gives them false ideas of life. Life is not chance, but a great system, social order, the interrelation of activities,—for this reason, keep your children from games of chance. Let them play; play is good,—a sheep, a lamb, a kid, a dear little boy or girl,—it is good to see them play. But you? You should be at work. It is mental, moral, physical suicide for *you* to drop out of the ranks of the workers.

But this idea that toil is ignoble must have originated somewhere. Perhaps it came from the old feudal system, where some were to

fight, and some were to stay at home and work; and the glory gathered round the fighters. That was a very primitive state of society. It prevailed among the North American Indians—the braves went to war, or they hunted; and the squaws did the housework, the baking, the farming. This division, of those who work and those who war, prevails only in a most rudimentary social state; but in a more refined form it obtains among us—the served and the servant. It must be a part of the abnormal attitude of our fallen nature towards life. Anything abnormal—against the rule, out of place—has this same disturbing effect on our conceptions.

Whatever your social setting, find your work, and do it faithfully. Your Father and your Brother work. You get far more tired of what you have than of what you do. Just think of it, and see if it is not so. Industry without heart is productive of deadness, lifelessness. Activity is much, but it is not all. Combined with it must be consideration for others. There must be community of interest with others, and a sympathetic adjustment of our activities to them. Madame de Staël said that her idea of life was “to be forever busy at what is worth while.” Aristotle de-

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fined life as “energy in action.” Be alive, and find out what form of activity will most worthily express your individuality! And train your children to the same conception of life.

I once had a friend send me some lines he had taken from a journal, with the request that when I reached the seaside, and the salt spray was making me tingle with life, I would set them to music, as he would like his boys to learn to sing them.

“O hark! for the hour is coming
When your ears shall anointed be.
Ay, listen! 'Tis rising and swelling
O'er populous land and sea.
The morning stars began it
At the dawn of Creation's birth;
And the circling spheres go swinging,
And singing it unto earth.
And earth shall forget her groaning,
And learn the song of the spheres;
And the tired shall sing, that are moaning;
And the sad shall dry their tears.

CHORUS:—

“Blessed are they that work!
Blessed are they that work!
For they shall inherit the earth
In the dawning day.

“Lo, the burden shall be divided,
And each shall know his own;
And the royalty of manhood
Shall be more than crown or throne;

And the flesh and blood of toilers
Shall no longer be less than gold;
And never an honest life shall be
Into hopeless bondage sold.
For we, the people, are waking;
And high and low shall employ
The splendid strength of union
For liberty, life and joy!

“For the song of the spheres is motion;
And motion and toil are life!
And the idle shall fail and falter
And yield at the end of strife.
As the stars tread the path appointed,
And the sun gives forth his heat,
So the sons of men shall labour
Ere they rest in leisure’s seat.
And the kings are to serve the people,
And wealth is to ease the poor,
And learning, to lift up the lowly,
And strength, that the weak may endure.”

I venture to repeat too Kipling’s rugged sturdy lines. The poem would hardly be classed among religious poems, but it is strong and virile, and our Christian hymnology is most woefully lacking in those characteristics. There is too much mere contemplation; for heaven, and the life there, means vastly more than this.

“When earth’s last picture is painted, and the tubes
are twisted and dried,
And the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest
critic has died,

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We shall rest, and faith, we shall need it—lie down
for an æon or two,
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us
to work anew !

“And those that were good shall be happy: they shall
sit in a golden chair;
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes
of comets' hair;
They shall find real saints to draw from—Magda-
lene, Peter and Paul;
They shall work for an age at a sitting, and never
be tired at all!

“And only the Master shall praise us, and only the
Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall
work for fame;
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in
his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It, for the God of
Things as They Are !”

Why doesn't some one put that sentiment
into the form of a hymn that we could use in
our churches? It will be done.

And there is that poem of Arthur Clough:—
Travel west—put your girdle round the earth
—dare, venture, achieve,—not for reward, but
for the joy of the doing.

Even in your body it is the activity and not
the receptivity that is more essential. I am not
sure of this—I have not thought it through,
but I think it is right. Consider your digestive
apparatus, its constant activity; and if you

experience four hours of indigestion after each meal, you will need no argument to prove to you that its unnoticed activity is far more important than the few minutes of pleasurable receptivity. So with your lungs—but you think it out.

O the joy of work! The sense of self-mastery and the mastery of tools! To feel the energy throbbing through you, and to know that you can control and guide that energy! To know that you can make every bit of it worth while! “Ah,” you say, “if you knew what my life is, you would not say so. If you knew on what a low plane I must work; how sordid, how uninteresting, how monotonous it is! You don’t know my life. Such work as mine cannot be uplifting, and you would not say it was if you knew.” Yes, I would. I regret that the sky-line is shut out of so many lives. I arraign the social conditions that make it so. They should be adjusted, and every man should be working towards that end. But be patient! It is for such a *little* while! Do the best you can where you are, or you will never be fitted for a higher or more responsible place. Use well the tool that is in your hand, and so prepare yourself to use a more delicate tool. It will be given to you as soon as you are

fully able to handle it. God will find you if you are busy, just where and as He has found all His workers—where He had placed them. And He will promote you if you are worthy of promotion. He does not waste energy. He always puts force where it will tell most.

I want to make three applications of this subject. Work fits us to know, and to grow, and to enjoy.

I. Work fits us to know,—to know God, and to know ourselves, and to know life. After you have done your day's work, find some one whom you can help. It is a sure cure for skepticism. Not in any easy chair, not from a book, not from friends whom you admire, and who, in their turn, admire you, do you get forceful growth, but in activity for those in need. From these you get clearer views of life. No man so occupied ever doubts God or His goodness. It is easy to go to the club in the evening, but if you would seek out misery and suffering, you would have full assurance of the divine as you felt it throbbing through you. Yes, you *have* a right to yourselves, to selfness, that is, to self-preservation, but not to the extent of disregarding the needs of others. Use your leisure in such a way as to prepare you for

more effective work. See what Gladstone did—after his days of hard labour, way into his old age—he sought out the poor of London, and went to them with help and cheer and counsel. Suppose at fifty he had said, “I have done my work ; now I will rest”—then never that long life and full energy ; never that crown of snowy glory !

II. Wholesome work makes us grow. Grown-up people understand the development of muscle, but children may not, and I would like to explain it with sufficient simplicity for them. You move your arm, and the muscle is used up little by little with every motion, and drifts off in a fine dust, and floats away on the rivers of the veins. Then you take a long breath of fresh air, and the blood, which by that time has reached the lungs, is purified and sent back to the heart. And the heart, by its steady action—pump, pump, pump,—sends it back to the very place where the waste, the use, was ; and the arm is built up again by tiny, dust-like particles. Or, if the need is elsewhere, then to that place the particles are sent. When you think hard, the head gets red, because the blood is carrying its fresh matter there, where, just then, the need is most tremendous.

So in the spiritual life. Use, and you will grow. Where you spend, you will be supplied; where you give, you will have it returned to you, good measure, shaken together, pressed down, and running over. If you do not use, you dwindle, as the unused muscle does.

III. Activity gives us the power to enjoy. Would you rather sing, or hear singing? Well, it would depend! But, all things being equal, the joy comes with the doing. Would you rather paint, or pay the admission fee to see a painting? O, the joy of being able to express one's self in colours! Would you rather do, or have some one do for you—rather minister, or be ministered unto?

God does not say, "Well thought!" though thought is often activity for Him; nor, "Well said!" though a true word, bravely spoken, is often loving service for Him: but He looks at all from the point of work, and says, "*Well done!* enter into the joy of your Lord."

Doing service for some of His little ones about you,—for our earth-life cannot be lived in heaven, but must be lived in the world, if it is to be lived for Him—that is the way Christ lived, when He and His Father *worked*.

II

WORK: A SOCIAL GRACE

“ May what we receive to-day influence what we do to-morrow, and make some one yearn for Thy gift.”

“ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”—
JOHN V. 17.

II

Work : A Social Grace

RUSKIN says : "Life without industry is sin ; industry without art is brutality." But art is relation. One tone, one tint, one stroke, one act—is not art. It has no relation ; it leads nowhere ; it accomplishes nothing ; it stands alone ; it has no meaning ; it is not to be regarded. But many related tones,—music ! Many strokes and colours,—a picture ! Many acts,—a life ! There is no such thing as an unrelated thing, except as a mental conception, when it is a mere theory, or as a determination of one's life, when it is a sin. A man who lives solely for himself has no right to live, for life is relation to others.

What is the eye if it be not in its true relation to the body ? Suppose the nerve is paralyzed ; the eye reflects images and light just as perfectly, but it is of no use—it is not truly an eye now, for it does not fulfill its purpose ; it is not in relation. There is

danger, but *I* am not warned ; there is an opportunity, but *I* cannot know it—the organ does not communicate with me. Think of an eye that with its glance has brought an ecstasy of bliss into your life, that to you has been an image of what perfection of life might be, that has clouded in sympathy with your sorrow, and glowed in response to your joy,—that has been the mirror of your very thoughts. Now take it out of its setting and hold it in your hand, and look at it, and admire it. Away with it ! It is a horror, a monstrosity ! It is not an eye ; it is a *wrong*,—it is wrung out of its place.

So a life must be in its place ; it must keep in proper relation, or it is useless, purposeless, without effect or beauty.

There is often a deep truth in popular proverbs. We do not say, “He works like a wolf.” We do not say, “As busy as a fly,” though it would not at times be an inapt expression. We do not send the sluggard to the cricket, for example, to be taught industry. But we say, “He works like a beaver” ; “As busy as a bee” ; “Go to the ant, thou sluggard.” Note that these are all animals that live in communities, and take their share of related labour. There is a truth in that. So God has given us varying

gifts, not to be exercised independently, but for mutual helpfulness,—“to some, apostles; to some, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing”: they form a community; they work for the body’s sake. If any part rebelled, or if all had the same office, where were the body! My will says, “Walk,” my feet respond and I do walk,—will and feet forming a community of action. I command my hand to grasp something, the hand responds, and the body is served.

Let the same principle run out into your social life, your church life. Think for others; let your desire to help be a constant goad. Think less of yourself and what you want. Don’t let things be in your lives what the Romans called their baggage, *impedimenta*, things in the way of the foot, always obstructing your truest and highest usefulness. Be superior to things. You are a servant, a clerk, a seamstress,—what does it matter? Work for the common good, the common weal, the commonwealth, as the people of Massachusetts put it,—the State, a part of the Nation! See how far out the ripples of your related activity reach!

“But,” you say, “can it be that my little bit of work, in my obscure corner, amounts to that?” O believe that it does, just as the

cogs and pivots of a watch are indispensable to its proper use, and then act on it. Do the work you must do, better than ever before ; let your work enter into your life. Perhaps you will hear the Master say, "Thou hast done it well ; try to do it better to-morrow." Watch the Master-Workman ; glimpses of His work will teach you in time "tricks of the tool's true play" ; level difficulties as far as you can ; clear the road for somebody else.

There are many grades of labour.

I. First, there is slave labour—for there is still slave labour in the land—work that must be done under the whip of necessity, under the lash of fear, under the threat of loss of place, without hope, without cessation, and then—to have the needs of life barely supplied ! When Abraham went down into Egypt, he is spoken of as having had so many "souls" with him ; now we say so many "hands." It does not look like progress, and yet we have made progress, for there is now much of labour on the second grade, namely,

II. Work to supply needs, to support and develop life, to equip the home, to beautify it, to furnish the mind and the æsthetic nature. This is all right and proper, and vastly higher than the other, but there is great

danger of its leading to selfishness—danger that the muscles of contraction will be abnormally developed, and the expanders will grow flabby ; danger that the centripetal will grow unduly strong and the centrifugal very faint and weak ; danger that acquisition shall rule for acquisition's sake, and not for self-preservation or even comfort. It is as if a bird should say, "I have built one nest, I guess I will build two. Now, I wonder how three would be ; or, perhaps, four would be better," and—he begins to feather his nests !

A good way to test how far one may acquire for one's self, is to use the tri-square,—one arm pointing towards God, and one towards man. Does this act honour God ? is it fair and kind towards my brother ? This will settle many difficulties. Leave yourself out of the reckoning, and you will find your life fairly adjusted to all true relationships.

III. Then, there is work for work's sake, with no thought of any reward it may bring, but just for the pleasure of putting your faculties into operation—work for the delight there is in it. This is fine ! I pity the man who has never experienced it. The absorption that would render Archimedes so dead to all around him that they could burn his

laboratory and he would not know ; the delight that draws you on into the hours of the night, that makes you wonder where the morning has flown. This is delicious !

IV. But better still is the feeling that comes over the best workers when they review their efforts : " I was irritable to-day, and a little lax ; I will do better to-morrow. I will work so as to help some one else. I will be more patient, more serviceable, more thoughtful." Then you reach the highest form of work—work for the good of others,—for the body's sake. As the eye gives warning of danger or opportunity, so be an eye to the body-social ; or a hand reached out in helpfulness ; or feet going on errands of thoughtful kindness. As you enter into this relation of mutual helpfulness, you learn more of the nature of God, who has revealed to us that He is ever thinking of us—that He makes all things work together for good for us ; He must, for the love of God must find expression. Love is never satisfied with merely being. But how about that unknowable time when we were not, and He had no object on which to lavish His love ? This is, to my mind, one of the strongest arguments for the Trinity. Love is relation, and God is love. God is eternal. Love is eternal, but

creation is not. Therefore, God must have had that in Himself which could be an object of love. He must be a sodality, a fraternity.

I bless God that we have grown out of the time when a man must be his own forester, his own lumberman, his own shoemaker, into the time when men band together for mutual helpfulness. The hunter wants vegetables, and the farmer does not want to be a vegetarian; and so they make an agreement:—"You bring me venison, and I will give you vegetables. You give me good measure, and I will give you good measure." But to do this, they must be related; *both* form the bud of a community. One is not a community; both are. We have grown out of unity into community. "O," you say, "that is communism!" Don't be afraid of that. Communism will never rule. The deathlessness of the individual is the death of communism. I will repeat that, for in it lies the solution of this question of communism,—"*The deathlessness of the individual is the death of communism.*" The man who forces himself out of kindly relation with his fellow men is really the one who plants the seeds of communism, for he plants dissatisfaction, unrest, a sense of injustice. He says, "I will get all I can, and give as little as I can. I will buy in a

cheap market and sell in a dear market. I will pay my employees just as little as I can, and still keep them working for me. I'm in business to make money. If I don't look out for myself, no one else will look out for me."

Have you ever gone trout-fishing, and felt as if the man who had been there before you ought not to live? He didn't care, so long as he got his mess of fish, who came after him. He was looking out for number one, and had left everything disordered and trampled and broken. No, a community of interests will not bring about communism. Did the community build houses and run engines and construct ships, to support the house-builder, the engineer, the shipwright; or, did society need roofs to cover them, and engines and ships to take their tired feet on their way? Why, the latter, of course. And one man especially fitted to build houses, finds employment, and at the same time finds his own support; the engineer, the shipwright, the cooper, the lawyer, the merchant, find society ready to support them in return for whatever of their specialty they give society.

I met, not long ago, a native Cuban, who said, speaking of an inexcusable fraud which had been practiced on the people of the island, "It is not only the present injustice of

the fraud which troubles me, but it is the long years it will take to reëstablish confidence." Some American merchants went down to Cuba, and offered excellent articles at fair prices, and then, when they had succeeded in persuading the natives to invest all their capital, they sent down an article so inferior in every way, that those small merchants were ruined. I pleaded that it was not an action of the American government, and would be set straight by them; but, ah, it will be so long before there is any confidence again! A man who could do that has no idea of mutual obligation; he was living out of relation, out of what should have been his social setting, and was simply a rascal.

What does all this mean to you? This: try to get yourselves into sympathetic relations with man; and not only with man, but with God, from whom alone the high motive comes.

I owe an apology to Emerson,—

“ The hand that rounded Peter’s dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity.
Himself from God he could not free ——”

I will improve on that,—

“ Himself from God he *would* not free ! ”

No human soul that has ever known the bliss of that copartnership will ever again wish to be free from its control.

I hope that when I am dead I shall be remembered as one who *worked*! Heaven will be work, relation. As Browning has said,—the here is there; the there is here; not two unrelated existences, but the one a completion and development of the other, or, as Tennyson says, no less beautifully —

“ And doubtless unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.”

III

THE ONE-TALENT MAN

“ May the memory of the consecration of His life be a challenge to our own. Lead us till we reach that timeless, tireless, sinless, deathless state, where there are no more sunsets and no more night.”

“ Quartus, a brother.”—ROMANS xvi. 23.

III

The One-Talent Man

“**Q**UARTUS, a brother”—that is all we know of him, and we know that only through Paul’s love for him. Gaius, the host of the church, we know ; and Erastus, the city-chamberlain, we know. These are great names, but Quartus has his place with them—he follows in the wake of these great leaders. And I am glad that immediately following his name comes, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” Quartus was contributing to that grace. It is only a coincidence, I know, but we have a right to our own little imaginings, and it is good to think that this obscure brother helped to bring about that great benediction, and, with others, sent a message of hope and love to the church which was at Rome. We are so used to our tattoo marks by which we classify men, and we think them so indispensable ! We insist so on labelling those who come under our observation ! We

can have no real relations with a man until we have properly pigeon-holed him ! Here is a man who comes before us only as a brother, but by so coming he calls attention to his worth (all unconsciously to himself) and supplies the greatest need of the world, for the world needs brotherhood more than anything else. This man had his name in the book of life, but he passed among men unmarked, in the same uniform as the others,—the regular blue jacket—*without* bands. There is no gold braid on his clothes ; he has no carriage. Others ride ; he walks. But he is the man the world needs, needs supremely. Quartus may be weak by himself, but when he unites with the many of his clan he is the mightiest force in the world. What *he* chooses, shall be,—it shall come to pass ; and what he vetoes, no power on earth can make successful.

But unhappily he himself often fails to recognize his power ; he and his people, too, often say—say because they are not leaders,—“ I have no talent ; I can do little ; my efforts count for nothing,” and so the work of the kingdom is left undone (for the leaders alone cannot do it),—when, if each would only use the talent he has, if each would do his little, nothing would remain undone of

all the great mass of work the Master has left for His church to do. Then our united power would be given to

“ The cause that needs assistance,
And the wrong that needs resistance,”

and God's kingdom would come with leaps and bounds.

Be ready to recognize Quartus,—he is the human bacillus, the life-giving germ, the vivifying cell from which activity and effectiveness go throughout the social organism—the *mikros bios*. He is the drop of water which, with its countless neighbours, forms the mighty ocean; the grain of sand which, with its fellows, spreads out the great sea-beaches; the kernel of corn producing the fields of tasselled grain; the leaf on the tree which, in myriads, makes the forest green; the blade of grass forming, with its kin, the beautiful carpets of earth. He is what St. Francis would have called, “Our little brother, Atom,” holding in himself the endowments and enduements and the marvellous forces on which all nature depends. Quartus is the *leucocyte*,—the white corpuscle in the blood, the free formative protoplasm of the life-current. He may have but one talent, he may be unknown, undistinguished,

but in union he is a mighty power, and is to be reckoned with.

Perhaps you may be able to say, "I stand with Gaius and Erastus." Then you, too, have your place,—an important and trying place. I do not underrate it. I know that you bear the burden of life, that you stand before men where you can be seen, under a blaze of light and a fire of criticism, and the world has great need of you. The world needs leaders. But you are not so apt to neglect your duty as these less talented brothers, and so I appeal to them.

Your name may be Primus or Secundus or Tertius or Quartus or Quintus or Sextus or Septus or Ultimus. Suppose it is only Ultimus, will you hold back the little that is in you, and so lose to the world what you might give? Or will you say, "I am only an atom, and not near the cutting edge of the chisel; I am not even steel, but only a grain of wood in the handle, but I will do what I can to push the work along." O if you only would! If you have only a half-talent, or a fifth of a talent, then for the service of God and the need of humanity, I call on you to use it! You draw back in your "humility," as you call it. It is a shameful humility! If you are as weak as you say, if you cannot inau-

gurate, if you cannot initiate, then coöperate. If you do not know how to secure interest on your money, go to the banker. If you do not know where your little will count consult a leader you can trust. If you are the last man in the line, still, stay in the line ; let us experiment together, and, though you be Ultimus, I promise you results.

I want to speak of two things in regard to Quartus—his danger and his duty.

I. His danger I have touched on ; the danger that the one-talent man will think his talent not worth using. He says, "If I were the two- or the five-talent man, it would be different." Yes, it would be different, but the responsibility would not be different. Each one is responsible for using what he has, not what he has not. He is still the individual, the indivisible, and God looks for returns from him, though only in proportion to what He has given him ; each man must give an account of himself to God.

The five-talent man must give larger return. He is seen and recognized. There is a force acting on him that will allow him neither to sit nor stand, but go. He cannot rest ; he must be active, he must be at work ; his gifts urge him on like a fire in his bones ; he feels an inward push, an outward pull,

and he does not think so much of others,—there is work to be done which he can do, and he must do it. But the one-talent man is apt to indulge in that odious comparative degree. He will not keep his eyes on the positive degree of fact, or the superlative degree of endeavour, but constantly compares his lack with his neighbour's endowments and weakens his own powers. The positive and superlative degrees carry a man right forward, but the comparative degree deflects his attention, and he turns his head from the main issue.

You say you amount to nothing, that you don't signify. Yes, you do signify or you would not be. You say, "I come into a room,—no one notices me. I go out,—no one feels any sense of loss. I enter an assembly, but am never invited to the platform. When my boat goes down stream, I do not notice that the banks are washed out much by the swells." Now, this is his chief danger. If all these one-talent members would line up, the treasury of the church would not long be empty. Other men go forth to battle, but these men stay at home, and so the cause flags and at least seems to fail for lack of workers. There comes an appeal for charity—others give, but these, because they can

give so little, will not give anything, and the starving die and the naked freeze, for the five-talent man cannot do it all.

This was the trouble with Meroz—just because they would not take their share in the battle. “Curse ye Meroz! Curse ye Meroz bitterly!” Why? “Because they came not up to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty!” They stood on the hilltop and saw the confusion, and said, “There seems to be some trouble in the camp, but I don’t know where to go, and I’m not much of a soldier, and my weapons are not in very good order; I guess I won’t go into it at all.” The true man would have said, “There is trouble, and I must help. I don’t know just where I’m needed, and I haven’t much skill nor very good weapons, but if they are in a strait they may be very glad of me; and I must go!” So the cause is saved. Be sure of this—the commonplace is God’s workshop, and the commonplace develops the uncommon. If there were no mountains there would be no valleys; if there were no lights there would be no shadows. The commonplace sun and moon and stars and sunrise and sunset and days and nights and seed-time and harvest and birds and fishes and

insects,—why, it is out of these commonplace things that God has made His beautiful world!

Out of the fibres and fragments and atoms of matter are built up muscles and tissues and sinews and bones and nerves, and loves and hates and aspirations and visions and dreams. The extraordinary rests on the ordinary, and presupposes it. Are you willing to be ordinary to support the extraordinary? “O,” you answer, “I *do* the ordinary; I earn my living; I try to make my house beautiful.” But I am not speaking of these necessary things. Do not even the publicans so? I want you to take a step from the undebatable necessary to the debatable necessary. “Here is something I might do, I could do. But I don’t know; *I* don’t amount to anything.” Don’t you, really? Is that honestly your estimate of yourself? Would you be satisfied if you knew others rated you so? Do you truly rate yourself so?

You say, “I am nothing.” Well and good; but bring nothing to the right side of an integer and it becomes ten, a hundred, a thousand, incalculable, innumerable increase. God’s figures turn our naughts into boundless stores of usefulness and power. He created the world out of nothing. He can

use nothing honestly brought to Him. He is Creator! He can use willing nobodies. I put it down on this lowest level, for I do not want any one to escape. For lack of the willing coöperation of the scantily endowed, the church suffers and is retarded. Because they are so far from Gaius and Erastus, they refuse to array themselves at all on the side of the kingdom.

II. Well, what is the duty of Quartus? He represents brotherhood. In one sense, the world needs this most, even more than motherhood. I had a letter from a lady recently which touched me deeply. It was written to enlist my interest in a young man, and she writes, "I have tried to mother him, but he needs something else. It is like being in an orchestra to try to help people. Some are like the drum, and can be beaten; some are like the cymbals, and you must take them up in your hands; some are like the violin, they must be held up close to you." Is not that beautiful? Some cannot be mothered, but they can be brothered. Go out to them as brothers; that you can do, and so help them to realize the brotherhood of Christ. How are they to learn to know God, else?

The church, you know, is a kind of human bee-hive. The queen-bee is the most im-

portant member of the hive. It is on her account and for her account that the hive exists. But she cannot go everywhere. The workers must do that,—and they are often hindered by the drones, for there are drones,—but the workers, consciously or unconsciously, must do the work. They gather the honey and the wax, sweetness and light.

Who then, is the man who can go to the bank and the counting-room and the office and the shop and the hospital and the work-room and the factory and the drawing-room and the concert-hall and the endless gathering places of men? Why, Quartus! He has the right of way; he knows the password. He can go in the power of Jesus to all the multitudes that no one else could reach. So you see your calling.

Quartus, *do* you see your calling? Advocate what you know is right. Oppose what you feel is wrong. Throw your force against evil. Help the good along. No matter if you are put out and voted out. If a man has given you help, go and tell him so. Let him have the comfort of knowing it, and don't withhold that comfort from him because you think he wouldn't care for praise from *you*. Stand for all things Christ stands for. Do you see your *calling*? You are to be a

brother to every one needing you, a servant to all wanting help ; you are to sacrifice yourself for others—to be strong where others are weak—to be kind as a big brother to the little brothers for the sake of the Elder Brother. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? You cannot all hold the places of Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, but you can all serve. Go and get your talent out of that hole in the earth—with this you can serve. Men, in your daily walks of life, you can serve the Christ. Women, you know this. In your homes, in your social circles, in your philanthropies, you can serve Christ.

As into the world we go, may we truly present Him who died for us, and lives for us, and waits to receive us!

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